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Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 ACDA-07
OMB-01 A-01 OPR-02 SY-05 /089 W
----------200317Z 014973 /63
O 200155Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 9978
INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E NT I A L LAGOS 3114

AF FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY SCHAUFELE AND AMBASSADOR EASUM

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, NI, AO, CG
SUBJECT: PRESSED BY ZAIRE, GARBA URGENTLY REQUEST MEETING
WITH SECRETARY MARCH 21.

REF: STATE 61181

1. SUMMARY: GARBA REPORTS ZAIRE FOREIGN MINISTER HAS GIVEN VERY DISTURBING REPORT ON SHABA SITUATION AND FMG IS GREATLY CONCERNED OVER DANGER OF ESCALATION AND INTERVENTION BY US AND SOVUNION IN SUPPORT OF ZAIRE AND ANGOLA. MOBUTU HAS ASKED NIGERIA TO MEDIATE; NIGERIAN REPRESENTATIVE WAS SENT TO ANGOLA MARCH 19 AND HEAD OF STATE OBASANJO URGENTLY WANTS GARBA TO SEE SECRETARY VANCE MONDAY, MARCH 21 TO DISCUSS WAYS OF LOCALIZING THE PROBLEM. GARBA PROPOSES SEE SOV AMBASSADOR DOBRYNIN ALSO. END SUMMARY.

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2. AS EXTAFF COMMISSIONER GARBA WAS UNAVAILABLE ALL DAY CHARGE LEFT A NOTE AT HIS RESIDENCE SATURDAY EVENING, INFORMING HIM OF MARCH 23 APPOINTMENT WITH SECRETARY VANCE AND ENCLOSING (UNIDENTIFIED) SCHAUFELE WIRELESS FILE ASSESSMENT OF SHABA SITUATION FOR HIS INFO.

3. AT 1 A.M. SUNDAY, MARCH 20 GARBA PHONED CHARGE, THANKED HIM FOR

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THE NOTE AND REPORTED HE HAD BEEN TIED UP ALL DAY WITH ZAIRE
FOREIGN MINISTER WHO HAD COME IN FRIDAY EVENING AND HAD REPORTED
TO HIM AND HEAD OF STATE OBASANJO ON VERY SERIOUS SITUATION
IN ZAIRE, WHICH GARBA OBSERVED WAS CORROROBORATED IN
PART BY MATERIAL CHARGE HAD GIVEN HIM. FMG HAD NO IDEA SITUATION
WAS SO SERIOUS UNTIL NOW. MOBUTU HAS ASKED NIGERIA TO MEDIATE,
AS IT IS ON GOOD TERMS WITH NETO AND SITUATION MUST BE HANDLED
QUICKLY AND CAREFULLY TO AVOID FURTHER ESCALATION AND MAJOR FOREIGN
INTERVENTION. MOBUTU DOES NOT WANT TO USE MORE FORCE, AS HE IS
ASSISTED BY BELGIUM, FRANCE AND THE US, AND A STEP-UP ON HIS
SIDE MIGHT PRECIPITATE STEPPED-UP ROLE BY SOVUNION IN SUPPORT
OF ANGOLA. GARBA ADDED THAT SITUATION ALREADY GROWING MORE COMPLEX,
WITH RADIO REPORTING THIS EVENING ATTACKS ON ZAIRE IN THE NORTHEAST
AND LAKE TANGANYIKA AREA.

4. GARBA SAID OBASANJO HAS SENT SOMEONE TO ANGOLA MARCH 19
TO TALK WITH NETO AND BELIEVES IT MOST IMPORTANT FOR GARBA TO
TALK WITH SECRETARY VANCE SOONEST TO EXPLORE WAYS OF LOCALIZING
THE SITUATION AND KEEPING IT FROM
BECOMING INTERNATIONALIZED THROUGH BUILD-UP OF US AND SOVIET
SUPPORT FOR THE TWO SIDES. GARBA EXPRESSED GRATITUDE FOR MARCH
23 APPOINTMENT WITH SECRETARY BUT URGENTLY ASKED IF IT IS POSSIBLE
EVEN SUNDAY EVENING, IF SECRETARY PREFERS.

5. GARBA LEAVES LAGOS 10:30 A.M. MARCH 20 FOR LONDON VIA NIGERIA
AIRWAYS AND WILL AKTAKE AN FMG EXECUTIVE AIRCRAFT THAL HAPPENS TO
BE
IN LONDON DIRECT FROM THERE TO WASHINGTON AT 5 PM MARCH20,
PROBABLY ARRIVING IN D.C. ABOUT 8 PM. HE WOULD LIKE TO MEET FOR
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PERHAPS AN HOUR WITH THE SECRETARY AND MAY THEN SEE SOVIET
AMBASADOR DOBRYNIN TO DISCUSS MECHANISMS FOR SOLVING THE ZAIRE
PROBLEM WUTHOUT MILITARY INTERVENTION OF US OR SOVUNION. GARBA
SAID OBASANJO WANTS HIM TO CONDUCT THESE CONSULTATIONS AND
RETURN LAGOS EARLIER THAN PREVIOUSLY PLANNED. OBASANJO CONSIDERS
HE HAS INFLUENCE WITH NETO AND WILL TRY TO GET HIM TO UNDERSTAND
THAT IDEOLOGY SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO DRIVE THIS SITUATION TO THE
BRINK OF MAJOR CATASTROPHE.

6. COMMENT: GARBA WAS CONSIDERABLY EXERCISED BY THE WORD BROUGHT
FROM KINSHASA. THIS SITUATION APPEARS TO OFFER UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY
FOR USG TO BE RESPONSIVE TO NIGERIAN CONCERNS OVER PEACE IN
THE AREA AND JOIN IN A COMMON APPROACH TO THE ZAIRE PROBLEM ON
A BASIS OF CLOSE CONSULTATION AND COODINATION. HAVING RELATIONS
WITH BOTH ZAIRE AND ANGOLA, NIGERIA APPEARS TO BE IN GOOD POSITION
TO MEDIATE. WOULD SEEM FROM HERE HIGHLY DESIRABLE FOR SECRETARY
TO SEE GARBA MARCH 21 IF AT ALL POSSIBLE. WE CAN GET WORD
TO HIM HERE BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE , OR DEPARTMENT CAN REACH
HIM THROUGH HIS AMBASADOR IN LONDON (WHO WILL MEET HIM ON HIS

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WAY THROUGH) OR IN WASHINGTON. GARBA SAYS THAT IN ANY EVENT HE PLANS TO FLY DIRECTLY TO WASHINGTON FROM LONDON, (SO IF MEETING WITH SECRETARY IS NOT POSSIBLE MARCH 21, GARBA MAY END UP SEEING DOBRYNIN FIRST.).
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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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